

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1           1.           A centerfire autoloading pistol with loaded chamber indicator  
2 comprising:

3           a housing having an external surface and defining a chamber to receive a  
4 cartridge, the housing defining a fulcrum; and

5           a movable element having a first end, a second end, and a center equally-spaced  
6 therebetween, the indicating element pivotally engaged with the fulcrum between the  
7 center and one of the ends,

8           wherein the indicating element is positioned in the housing to contact the  
9 cartridge and is movable to a position in which the element protrudes outwards from the  
10 external surface of the housing to provide a user of the pistol with a visual and tactile  
11 indication that the cartridge is loaded in the chamber.

1           2.           The pistol of claim 1, wherein the element is movable from a first  
2 position in which the element does not protrude outwards from the external surface of the  
3 housing to a second position in which the element protrudes outwards from the external surface  
4 of the housing.

1           3.           The pistol of claim 2, wherein the element is positioned generally behind  
2 the chamber and the first end is a front end and the second end is a rear end, the front end  
3 located closer to the chamber than the rear end, wherein the element is pivotally engaged with  
4 the fulcrum at the rear end.

1           4.           The pistol of claim 3, wherein the entire element between the fulcrum  
2 and front end is movable from the first position to the second position.

1           5.           The pistol of claim 3, wherein the element is retained within the housing  
2 by a horizontal surface located adjacent to the second end which mates with a corresponding  
3 horizontal surface in the housing.

1           6.           The pistol of claim 5, wherein the horizontal surface in the housing is the  
2 bottom surface of a rear sight attached to the housing.

1           7.           The pistol of claim 1, wherein the indicating element is pivotally  
2 engaged with the fulcrum with a pinless connection.

1           8.           The pistol of claim 1, wherein indicia are provided on a side surface of  
2 the element to communicate to the user that a cartridge is loaded in the chamber, the indicia  
3 comprising at least one alphanumeric character that is at least 0.085 inches tall and visible to  
4 the user when the element protrudes outwards from the external surface of the housing.

1           9.           The pistol of claim 1, wherein the pistol comprises an external surface  
2 and at least a portion of the element protrudes outwards from the external surface of the pistol  
3 in the loaded-chamber-indication position to provide a user of the pistol with a visual and  
4 tactile indication that the cartridge is in a loaded condition.

1           10.          The pistol of claim 1, wherein the element is mounted in the top of the  
2 housing.

1           11.          The pistol of claim 10, wherein the element is an elongated lever and the  
2 top of the housing comprises an elongated slot configured to pivotally receive the element.

1           12.          The pistol of claim 11, wherein the lever further comprises a support  
2 base projecting downwards from a bottom surface of the lever which rests on the housing.

1           13.          The pistol of claim 12, wherein the elongated slot contains a landing  
2 configured to receive the support base of the lever.

1           14.          The pistol of claim 1, wherein the element comprises a forward sloping  
2 surface on the first end to make smooth initial contact with the cartridge.

1           15.          A centerfire autoloading pistol with loaded chamber indicator  
2 comprising:

3           a reciprocating slide having an external surface;  
4           a chamber to receive a cartridge, the chamber disposed in the slide; and  
5           an elongated indicating element having a front end, a second end, and a mid-  
6 portion between the ends, the indicating element pivotally mounted at the rear end to  
7 the slide and positioned in the slide to contact the cartridge;

8 wherein the indicating element is displaceable by contact with the cartridge to a  
9 loaded-chamber-indication position in which the indicating element protrudes outwards  
10 beyond the external surface of the slide.

1 16. The pistol of claim 15, wherein the indicating element is mounted in the  
2 top of the slide and is displaceable in an upward direction.

1 17. The pistol of claim 16, wherein the mid-portion and front end are  
2 displaceable to the loaded-chamber-indication position.

1 18. The pistol of claim 17, wherein the rear end of the indicating element is  
2 restrained in the slide without a pinned connection by two opposing horizontal surfaces  
3 arranged to contact each other, one of the horizontal surfaces disposed on the indicating  
4 element and the other horizontal surface disposed in the slide.

1 19. The pistol of claim 18, wherein the cartridge has a rim which holds the  
2 element in the loaded-chamber-indication position.

1 20. A centerfire autoloading pistol with loaded chamber indicator  
2 comprising:

3 a housing having an external surface and a fulcrum;  
4 a chamber to receive a cartridge and disposed in the housing; and  
5 a bar-shaped lever having a first end, a second end, and a mid-portion between  
6 the two ends, the lever pivotally engaged with the fulcrum proximate to the first end  
7 and positioned in the housing to contact the cartridge,

8 wherein the second end and mid-portion of the lever are both unconstrained and  
9 displaceable in relation to the housing by contact of the lever with the cartridge to a  
10 loaded-chamber-indication position such that at least part of the lever protrudes  
11 outwards beyond the external surface of the housing to provide a user of the pistol with  
12 a visual and tactile indication that the cartridge is loaded in the chamber.

1 21. The pistol of claim 20, wherein the second end and mid-portion of the  
2 lever are retractable to an unloaded-chamber-indication position in which the lever does not  
3 substantially protrude outwards from the housing.

1           22.           The pistol of claim 20, wherein the lever is at least 1.0 inches in length.

1           23.           The pistol of claim 20, wherein indicia are provided on a side surface of  
2 the lever to communicate to the user that a cartridge is loaded in the chamber, the indicia  
3 comprising at least one alphanumeric character that is at least 0.085 inches tall and visible to  
4 the user when the element protrudes outwards from the external surface of the housing.

1           24.           A centerfire autoloading pistol with loaded chamber indicator  
2 comprising:  
3           a frame;  
4           a slide slidably mounted to the frame and a cavity disposed therein, the slide  
5 having an external surface and a fulcrum;  
6           a barrel movably disposed at least partially in the slide cavity and defining a  
7 chamber to receive a cartridge;  
8           a firing pin disposed in the slide;  
9           a trigger pivotally mounted to the frame;  
10          a hammer operably connected to the trigger and positioned to contact the firing  
11 pin to discharge the pistol; and  
12          a bar-shaped lever having a first end, a second end, and a mid-portion between  
13 the two ends, the lever pivotally engaged with the fulcrum proximate to the first end  
14 and positioned in the slide to contact the cartridge,  
15          wherein the second end and mid-portion of the lever are both unconstrained and  
16 upwardly displaceable in relation to the slide by contact of the lever with the cartridge  
17 to a loaded-chamber-indication position in which at least part of the lever protrudes  
18 outwards beyond the external surface of the slide,  
19          whereby a user of the pistol is provided with a visual and tactile indication that  
20 the cartridge is loaded in the chamber.

1           25.           The pistol of claim 24, wherein the second end and mid-portion of the  
2 lever are downwardly retractable to an unloaded-chamber-indication position in which the  
3 lever does not substantially protrude outwards from the housing.

1           26.           The pistol of claim 25, further comprising a spring that acts against the  
2 lever and biases the lever towards the unloaded-chamber-indication position.

1           27.           The pistol of claim 24, wherein the lever is at least 1.0 inches in length.

1           28.           A method of indicating a loaded pistol chamber condition comprising:  
2 loading a cartridge into a chamber of a pistol having a housing with an external  
3 surface;  
4 contacting an elongated element having two ends at one end with the cartridge;  
5 pivoting the element about an opposite end by the cartridge contact;  
6 displacing the element; and  
7 protruding at least part of the element outwards from the external surface of the  
8 housing to a loaded-chamber-indication position to signal a loaded chamber condition  
9 to a user of the pistol.

1           29.           The method of claim 28, further comprising the steps of:  
2 breaking contact between the cartridge and the element; and  
3 retracting the element inside the housing to an unloaded-chamber-indication  
4 position.

1           30.           The method of claim 28, further comprising placing indicia on the part  
2 of the element that protrudes outwards from the external surface of the housing to communicate  
3 a loaded chamber condition.